



# Cost Share Program Available for Fruit & Vegetable Growers

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MADISON – Fruit and vegetable producers have an additional tool to minimize food safety hazards, ensure a safe product, and increase sales through the GAP/GHP Audit Verification Program. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is offering a GAP/GHP Cost Share Program to defray the cost of this voluntary audit.

GAP/GHP is administered by DATCP under a cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) audit measures efforts to reduce the risk of microbial contamination at the farm/harvesting level of production, and the GHP (Good Handling Practices) audit measures efforts after harvest in the packing, handling, storage, transportation and processing stages.

“Producers are committed to producing an abundant and safe food supply,” said Tim Leege, the Manager of DATCP’s Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Unit. “GAP/GHP audits farms against good agricultural practice guidelines.”

USDA trained and licensed auditors provide an unbiased review of growers, handlers, or receivers’ practices. Audits are done when operations are running and workers are present. The audit results are valid for one year from the date of inspection and are validated through the use of unannounced audit(s) throughout the growing/packing season.

“This fee-for-service audit is not mandatory but many produce buyers are requiring growers to participate in a third party verification program,” explained Leege. “The USDA’s GAP/GHP program was developed at the request of the fruit and vegetable industry, state departments of agriculture, and consumers.”

Wisconsin’s cost share program allows for eligible parties to be reimbursed 75% of the audit cost, with no maximum on the amount. There is also a \$50 base payment to the USDA for the audit. To be eligible, a GAP/GHP audit must be conducted, and the bill must be paid on time. The audit does not need to be passed to receive reimbursement.

“Wisconsin’s cost share program will allow fruit and vegetable producers to participate in this voluntary audit while removing a majority of the financial barrier,” concluded Leege. “I encourage producers to contact me now to coordinate a GAP/GHP audit for this season.”

For more information on the cost share program, contact Leege at [tim.leege@wisconsin.gov](mailto:tim.leege@wisconsin.gov) or 715-345-5212. To learn more about GAP/GHP, visit [datcp.wisconsin.gov](http://datcp.wisconsin.gov), under *Business, Fruit and Vegetable Inspection*.

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